CLD
COUNCIL FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

LD Forum

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President's Message

Over the last year, a number of high profile issues have compelled people to begin speaking up about intolerable behavior. Movements have been launched to demand that we, as a society, expect better of each other—particularly those in positions of leadership or power. Although the changes are encouraging, it is regrettable that they are being made after problems have reached a crisis stage. The better approach would be to take steps proactively to prevent the circumstances from occurring in the first place. The preventative approach aligns with the efforts of organizations, such as the Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD), to establish positive norms for members.

To that end, we recently posted a *Statement of Ethics and Standards* on the CLD website. This product was developed by our Liaison Committee co-chairs, **Debi Gartland** and **Roberta Strosnider,** with input from the **Executive Committee.** Among the many important ideas the 243-word statement communicates, some form of the word "professional" is used eight times. That is 2 to 3 mentions in each of the three sections of the statement. In particular, I hope you will note the emphasis on qualities such as professional integrity, professional competency, collaboration, advocacy, and non-discrimination. These are all a part of CLD's theme for the current year and of our work in this field every year.

When I was a doctoral student, one of my early course assignments was to review various professional organizations' standards for ethical professional conduct when engaging in research related to students with disabilities. In looking back at that paper for the first time in over a decade, it struck me that the common themes I identified then could be applied to CLD's statement today: (a) upholding the reputation of the profession, (b) protecting the rights of individuals, and (c) working for the common good. The standards address the potential influence our actions might have in immediate and broader contexts.

Similar kinds of guiding principles can be identified in the dispositions on which we evaluate our pre-service teacher candidates, and they are reflected in the educator conduct codes of many states (e.g., **Alaska, Iowa, Oregon, Pennsylvania,** and **Texas**). Teachers have been stripped of their licenses for behaviors such as cheating on graduate coursework, stealing students' prescription drugs, failing to report child abuse, making personal purchases on a school account, and having inappropriate relationships with students. These are extreme cases that can lull us into a sense of complacency about our own professional conduct because we are not doing anything as egregious as that.

Because we all can benefit from self-reflection and recalibration, I invite you to engage in dialogue with your colleagues about CLD's ethics and standards to develop a shared understanding of what they mean. You can try using the following questions as springboards for your discussion:

- What do these statements mean you would expect to see someone in our field doing or not doing?
- Is there additional information that would be necessary to help someone new to our field understand these statements and the ways in which the statements apply to our work?
- How should we hold each other accountable for exemplifying these standards?

Thank you for your stewardship of our profession!

Deborah Reed
CLD President

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The Explicit Connection: Vocabulary and Secondary Students with LD

| **Lydia Gerzel-Short** | **Rhonda Miller** | **Jeremy R. Mills** |
| *Texas A&M University–San Antonio* | *Coastal Carolina University* | *Wright State University* |

Increasing numbers of students with learning disabilities (LD) are educated in general education (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014; McLeskey, Landers, Williamson, & Hoppey, 2010), with more than 68% of students with LD spending 80% or more of their instructional day outside of special education classrooms (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014; McFarland et al., 2017). While having access to general education is promising, students with LD continue to require a variety of supports. To address both the needs of students with LD and increasing concerns over accountability, all teachers must implement sound instructional strategies to improve positive academic outcomes for all students including those with LD (IDEA, 2004). Additionally, middle and high school teachers are expected to not only teach their content area standards but are also expected to support reading achievement for all students (Hougen, 2014).

Struggling readers in the secondary grades, including students with LD, have had such a long history of difficulties and frustrations during their schooling that they often develop coping strategies for reading difficult texts, including word guessing, word skipping, or pretending to read (Hougen, 2014). Due to a lack of confidence and low motivation for reading (Baker, Simmons, & Kame'enui, 1998; Bryant, Goodwin, Bryant, & Higgins, 2003), some students with LD read less often (Bryant et al., 2003), and therefore acquire less vocabulary knowledge than non-struggling readers (Baker et al., 1998). As a result, many students with LD may find it difficult to access new information (Brigham, Brigham, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2011) in content area courses that are heavily laden with unfamiliar, multisyllabic, content-specific words (Hougen, 2014). Teachers who consistently use effective strategies, including explicit and systematic reading instruction, can improve outcomes for all struggling readers (Hougen, 2014; Kuder, 2017). To this end, the present article presents evidence-based instructional methods that teachers can employ for selecting, teaching, and practicing essential vocabulary to promote improved access to general education curriculum.

Word Selection and Preteaching Vocabulary

The vast number of new words secondary students encounter is astonishing, upwards of 10,000 new words annually, and the majority are content specific, multisyllabic words that are difficult to read and understand (Hougen, 2014). In content area classes such as science and social studies, students are required to navigate many different kinds of expository text, and numerous classroom activities are based on the concepts contained in those texts. The language of math, too, is difficult to understand because it lacks many of the context clues found in other kinds of texts. Also, math contains many different abstract symbols that need to be taught explicitly (Bryant, Bryant, & Hammill, 2000). Content area vocabulary is rarely part of students' everyday vocabulary, so to engage in the content, students need to learn this specialized vocabulary (Kamil, Borman, Dole, Kral, Salinger, & Torgesen, 2008).

Students with LD find it challenging to learn new content area vocabulary that is attached to unfamiliar concepts (Brigham et al., 2011). Preteaching content area vocabulary can build background and provide a context for the content being taught (National Reading Panel 2000; Jitendra, Edwards, Sacks, & Jacobson, 2004). Research recommends choosing 5–8 words from a selected text (Baker et al., 2014). When choosing these words, teachers should select *critical words, academic words,* and *challenging words* (Graves, 2009).

Critical words are words that are crucial to the understanding of the text and frequently appear within text materials. Critical words are the words that students need to know to be able to discuss the text, to understand test questions about the text, and to compose written responses. Critical words can include the bolded words, underlined, or highlighted words often found in textbooks. Also, critical words can be extracted from content area standards. For instance, when a math standard reads, "Draw polygons in the coordinate plane given coordinates for the vertices" (CCSS.Math. Content.6.G.A.3 retrieved from **http://www.corestandards .org/Math/Content/6/G/**), the student will need to understand and interact with the critical words: *polygon, coordinate plane,* and *vertices*.

Academic words are words that are seen and repeatedly experienced across content areas (Love, Spies, & Morgan, 2017), and are often part of the instructions for a task (e.g., *compare and contrast* the characteristics of snakes and turtles, *construct* a right angle, or *summarize* the causes of WWI). Academic words too can be extracted from content area standards and can be found in multiple content-area standards. For instance, a standard for math reads, "Compare properties of two functions each represented in a different way

(algebraically, graphically, numerically in tables, or by verbal descriptions)" (CCSS.Math.Content.HSF.IF.C.9 retrieved from **http://www.corestandards.org/Math/Content/HSF/IF/C/9/**) while a standard for social studies reads "Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources" (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9 retrieved from **http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/9-10/9/**). In both tasks, the student is asked to look at two different items and talk about how they are alike and different. Teachers should teach academic words to support students' access to a variety of content area texts.

Challenging words are words or phrases that are not readily found in dictionaries and require explicit instruction. Such words include idiomatic expressions (e.g., "all in the same boat") and homonyms. Challenging words can also include words that have different pronunciations, meanings, and parts of speech (e.g., produce = to make; produce = foods which are fruits and vegetables). Challenging words are essential to understanding text and often can only be understood within the context they are being used. Teachers should teach challenging words because students with LD often struggle with the pragmatic use of language and can misinterpret the meaning of vocabulary.

The decision to teach critical words, academic words, and challenging words either in isolation or simultaneously can be based on instruction designed in consideration of students' prior knowledge and individual needs. Teachers teach critical words when the focus is on accessing the content, and teachers teach academic words when the focus is on "understanding academic texts across a range of disciplines" (Beach, Sanchez, Flynn, & O'Connor, 2015, p. 36). Challenging words are taught when typical comprehension strategies to decode vocabulary will not work. For all of these vocabulary words, explicit instruction reduces the potential for misinterpretation of unfamiliar words.

Teaching Through Explicit Instruction

To teach these new and difficult words to struggling readers, Foorman et al. (2016) and Jitendra et al. (2004) recommend the use of explicit instruction. Explicit instruction is an effective teaching strategy for students with LD because its direct and systematic approach provides students with scaffolded supports to aid in learning new material in small, manageable steps (Archer & Hughes, 2011). Explicit instruction unambiguously presents information while providing more time on task for students (Archer & Hughes, 2011). The consistent use of explicit instruction strategies establishes an instructional routine that helps to reduce the cognitive load of students with LD and provides multiple exposures to the target words (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Bryant et al., 2003).

Archer and Hughes (2011) created a routine for explicit instruction of new vocabulary. First, the teacher introduces a new word by modeling the pronunciation of the word and then provides a clear and concise student-friendly definition. The teacher creates a Student Friendly Definition (SFD) by starting with a dictionary definition and changing any difficult words to student-friendly words. Next, the teacher illustrates the new word by providing examples (e.g., a sentence that uses the word, visuals that represent the word, etc.). Students are engaged in a fast-paced exchange of teacher modeling and student-response (see Figure 1) with immediate teacher feedback as the teacher checks for understanding throughout the lesson.

Explicit instruction provides opportunities for students to interact with the target words and can be used to teach many aspects of vocabulary such as the pronunciation and definition of a target word (Figure 1), the attributes of a target word (Figure 2), and semantic connections to other words that students already know. Additional extensions of target word instruction can include different forms or derivations of target words (Figure 3).

Opportunities to Practice and Interact with Target Words

Secondary students require at least 12–17 different exposures to a new vocabulary word to fully understand the word (Hougen, 2014). Repeated exposures to new target vocabulary words should include interactions with student-friendly definitions, parts of speech, identification of various attributes of

T: This word is *ratify*. You try it. What word?
S: *Ratify*.
T: Yes, *ratify*. Ratify means to officially approve a document, usually a government document. What does ratify mean?
S: Officially approve a document.
T: Correct. *Ratify* means to officially approve a document. People can ratify treaties. Governments can ratify a constitutional amendment, a bill, or a declaration of war. If I say that Congress is going to approve a government document, I would say they are going to what?
S: *Ratify* it.
T: Yes. *Ratify*. Samuel Adams was a member of the group of statesmen who *ratified* the U.S. Constitution. Remember when we discussed the Sons of Liberty and Samuel Adams? He was elected to the Massachusetts convention and was a part of the Constitution's *ratification*. *Ratification* comes from the word ratify. Samuel Adams was someone who officially approved the Constitution which is another way to say that the Constitution was _____.
S: *Ratified.*
T: Yes, *ratified.*

Figure 1. Sample script for teaching pronunciation and definition of the target word, *Ratify.* **T=teacher; S=students.**

> **T:** This word is *polygon*. You try it. What word?
> **S:** *Polygon.*
> **T:** Yes, *Polygon*. A *polygon* is a special type of shape. A *polygon* has to have 3 or more sides. How many sides?
> **S:** 3 or more
> **T:** Yes, 3 or more. All sides have to be straight, no curves, only straight. So a *polygon* has to have at least 3 sides, and the sides all have to be what?
> **S:** Straight.
> **T:** Yes, straight. A *polygon* also has to be closed. That means that all the sides meet at corners and there is no overlap. (points to a square that has sides extending beyond the vertices). This shape is NOT a *polygon* because its sides overlap. (points to a shape that is open). This shape is NOT a *polygon* because it is open. See? The sides do not touch here. So, a *polygon* has to have at least 3 sides, all sides have to be straight, and the *polygon* has to be what?
> **S:** Closed.
> **T:** Yes, closed. So a square (points to a square) has 4 sides, which is more than 3. All the sides are straight, and it is a closed shape without overlap. So a square is a *polygon*. Then if a shape has 3 or more sides that are all straight and the shape is closed, we can call it a what?
> **S:** *Polygon.*
> **T:** Correct, *polygon*.

Figure 2. Sample script for teaching attributes of the target word, *polygon*. T=teacher; S=students.

> **T:** This word is *transpiration*. You try it. What word?
> **S:** *Transpiration*
> **T:** Yes, *transpiration* is a noun. *Transpiration* means the passage of water vapor from a living body through membranes or pores. What does *transpiration* mean? What part of speech?
> **S:** Passage of water vapor from a living body through membranes or pores. It is a noun.
> **T:** Correct. Another variation of *transpiration* is *transpire*. This word is a verb meaning to take place or be revealed or to pass vapor. What word?
> **S:** *Transpire.*
> **T:** Yes, *transpire*.

Figure 3. Sample script for teaching derivations of a target word, *transpiration*. T=teacher; S=students.

target words, and should include opportunities for students to say, read, and write the words within context (Archer & Hughes, 2011).

One way to provide opportunities to interact with vocabulary is through the use of graphic organizers. The use of graphic organizers (GOs) has been effective in helping students with and without LD to learn content material across grade levels (Ellis & Howard, 2007). Graphic organizers (GOs) are visual devices that provide an organizational system for information and reduce the cognitive load for students with LD by reducing the language demands of the task (Ellis & Howard, 2007). The reduced cognitive load can ease the level of anxiety many students with disabilities carry into the classroom before the delivery of any instruction (Singleton, & Filce, 2015). An example of using a GO to interact with target vocabulary might be to use a GO that represents the life cycle of a butterfly. Students would work with target vocabulary to identify life cycle phases while building a visual support. A *Frayer Model* (Frayer, Frederick, & Klausmeier, 1969) is another example of a graphic organizer. In this example, students interact with the target words by completing a GO consisting of four connecting blocks with the target word in the center of the blocks. Students write the semantic attributes of the target word (e.g. rhombus). Attributes may include characteristics, antonyms, synonyms, examples, non-examples, SFD, and images. Through repeated exposures to target vocabulary words, students gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of target vocabulary words.

GOs are most effective when the teacher explains the reason for using the GO and uses explicit instruction to teach how to use the GO (Ellis & Howard, 2007). There are a variety of GOs that can be differentiated to support students. The purpose of using a GO is to support the students in creating a connection between the textual content and the concepts being taught (Singleton, & Filce, 2015). When determining what GO to use, teachers should consider the content-area and the purpose the GO will serve. For example, when teaching a new target word such as *evapotranspiration*, a semantic connections GO (Figure 4) might be employed. In this example connecting words conceptually frame known and unknown information like a visual roadmap. Figure 5 provides an example of a semantic features GO of the concept *polygon*. In this example, students are framing the target word *polygon* into the various features/attributes of the word.

GOs extend learning opportunities for new vocabulary (Singleton, & Filce, 2015) while exploring content area concepts and connecting to previously learned concepts. Teachers who explicitly model how to use GOs and when to use Gos can assist students with LD in becoming more efficient learners whereby decreasing cognitive demands and increasing understanding (Singleton, & Filce, 2015).

Conclusion

Engaging secondary students with LD in vocabulary development is essential. Often, students with LD struggle with the basic understanding of words which significantly impacts content texts and instruction. Bypass strategies such as dictionary work do not provide the adequate scaffolding of vocabulary (Bryant et al., 2003) because students are not actively engaged in learning new words. Incorporating explicit vocabulary instruction with multiple opportunities for
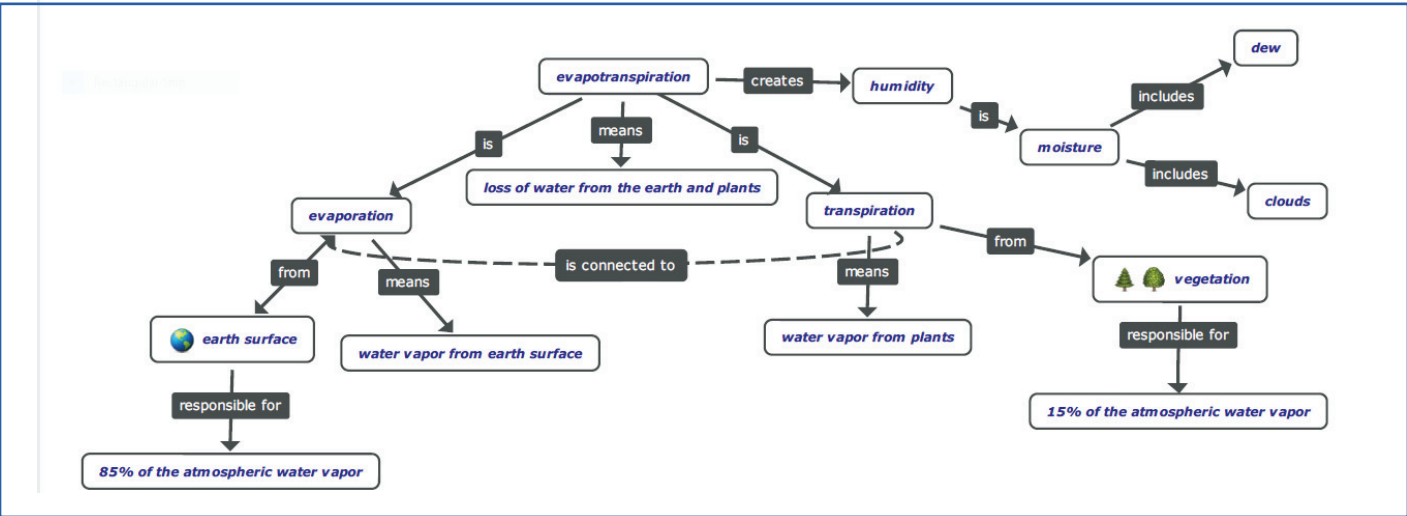
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Figure 4. Semantic connections of the target word, *evapotranspiration***.**

practice will help all struggling readers, but especially students with LD, develop deeper meaning from the materials being taught and will provide more opportunities for students to become actively engaged in learning target vocabulary words and difficult content that might have otherwise been accessible to master.

Author Note: Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Lydia Gerzel-Short (**Lydia.Gerzel-Short@ tamusa.edu**) Texas A&M University-San Antonio, One University Way, San Antonio, TX 78224

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Figure 5. This graphic organizer provides the semantic features/attributes of the target word, *polygon***.**

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(Research to Practice, *continued from page 5***)**

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CLD is Turning 40!
40th Annual International Council for Learning Disabilities Conference
Portland, Oregon | October 11-12, 2018

Mark your calendars for a fantastic learning experience! The 2018 International CLD Conference will be held in Portland Oregon, October 11–12, 2018. Join us at the beautifully redesigned, Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront Hotel in vibrant downtown Portland.

2018 J. Lee Wiederholt Distinguished Lecturer

We are excited to announce **Donald D. Hammill, Ed.D.** of Pro-Ed, Inc. Hammill Institute on Disabilities will serve as the J. Lee Wiederholt Distinguished Lecturer.

Program Chair

Dr. Lindy Crawford, CLD Vice-President, serves as the Program Chair for the 40th Annual Conference. Dr. Crawford anticipates notifying presenters of accepted presentations in **mid-May.**

LAC Co-Chairs

Maria Peterson-Ahmad and **Nancy Nelson**, along with the LAC are diligently working on identifying sponsorships, coordinating volunteers, and finding activities in Portland for conference attendees. Please contact **Maria Peterson-Ahmad or Nancy Nelson** if you are interested in lending a hand!

Breaking News!

Book your room today! **Hotel** reservations are now open!

Conference registration will be opening in April, so be sure to stay connected to CLD for future updates.

Connect with CLD
Facebook & **Twitter**

2018 Conference Sponsorship

Are you interested in sponsoring the CLD Conference? Sponsorship is essential to the conference's success. The conference committee is now accepting sponsorships! For more information, please contact **Jessica Turtura**.

Updates from Colorado CLD

The Colorado Council for Learning Disabilities held the 18th year of Math on the "PLANES" conference February 23rd and 24th. The keynote speaker was **Dr. Barbara Dougherty**. We had middle and high school teachers from across the state come and learn effective mathematical strategies for struggling learners in the classroom. Below are a sample of "take-a-ways" from conference participants:

- I very much appreciated Barb's emphasis on mathematical language and developmentally appropriate methodology and her modeling of this throughout the workshop.
- As a researcher, Dr. Dougherty is very knowledgeable. Her extensive experience in the classroom was apparent as she shared evidenced-based practices and activities that were classroom tested.
- I was reticent to use games in my classroom. Dr. Dougherty demonstrated how activities in a game format are powerful ways to engage students while reinforcing conceptual understanding.
- I knew manipulatives were good tools; but I didn't know how to use them effectively to extend the thought processes. This workshop helped me to see how to use manipulatives to help all my students develop a deeper understanding of mathematic concepts.
- Precise language creates understanding and reduces confusion.
- I will encourage teachers to think in terms of reversibility, generalization, and flexibility questions.
- This reinforces the importance of scaffolding, building on what students know and previously learned.
- Teaching integer operations using two-colored counters to express "zero pairs" will be a game changer for my kids!
- We need to support conceptual understanding. Pay now or pay later—making connections between concrete, representational and abstract concurrently . . . TEACH IT WELL OR TEACH IT AGAIN!!!

CCLD also recognized two scholarship award recipients who are both earning a reading interventionist degree. Both received $1800 to put towards their graduate program.

Finally, CCLD hosted another webinar around mathematical models when solving equations and inequalities. The webinar was well attended and focused on visual models to help students become confident in their solving of one-, two-, and multi-step equations and equalities.

Updates from Maryland CLD

MCLD Joins Maryland Council for Exceptional Children to Co-Sponsor 2018 Winter Conference

The Maryland CLD Chapter and Maryland CEC again joined forces to plan and sponsor a professional development conference on Saturday, April 7, 2018, held at Loyola University Graduate Center in Columbia, MD. The conference was entitled, "Supporting the WHOLE Child: Meeting the Diverse Needs of Our Student." **Ms. Kara Ball,** the 2018 DoDEA State Teacher of the Year and one of four finalists for 2018 National Teacher of the Year, was the keynote speaker at the conference. Following the keynote address, participants had the opportunity to attend breakout sessions. The co-sponsorship is made possible as a result of a generous CLD Chapter Grant.

Debi Gartland, *MCLD President*

Updates from Virginia CLD

The Virginia Council for Learning Disabilities is excited to share information regarding our upcoming one-day Symposium to be held on **April 21, 2018 at Marymount University,** Rowley Hall, 2807 North Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22207. The theme of our Symposium this year is *Supporting Culturally Diverse Learners.*

Registration and continental breakfast begins at 8 a.m. Symposium events run from 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m., beginning with a dynamic keynote address, followed by an awards luncheon, then an afternoon of more than a dozen engaging break-out sessions to enrich and inspire your work with students with learning disabilities.

Our Keynote Speaker is **Vicky G. Spencer, Ph.D, BCBA-D.** Dr. Spencer holds a doctorate in special education, and she is also a certified Educational Diagnostician and a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA-D). In addition to teaching for Johns Hopkins University, she has a private practice, *Beyond Diagnosis,* where she works as an international special education consultant. For the past fourteen years, she has been actively involved in research in examining the use of effective academic and behavioral strategies for ALL students and the effectiveness of these strategies among students with disabilities. She has numerous publications in refereed journals of high quality in the field of special education and has published five books that focus on teaching students with disabilities. Dr. Spencer, a Fulbright Scholar, also has a strong interest in international

education and recently relocated back to the United States after teaching at Dar Al Hekma University in Saudi Arabia for the past two and a half years. She is currently serving as the President for the Council for Exceptional Children's Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES). She has over 25 years of experience in the United States as a classroom teacher, university professor, disability specialist, teacher trainer, and parent consultant.

Online registration is now open. Here's the link to our Symposium page for all of the information: **http://vcld. org/2018-symposium/**

CLD Mission & Vision

Mission Statement: The Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD), an international organization composed of professionals who represent diverse disciplines, is committed to enhancing the education and quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities across the life span. CLD accomplishes this by promoting and disseminating evidence-based research and practices related to the education of individuals with learning disabilities. In addition, CLD fosters (a) collaboration among professionals; (b) development of leaders in the field; and (c) advocacy for policies that support individuals with learning disabilities at local, state, and national levels.

Vision Statement: All individuals with learning disabilities are empowered to achieve their potential.

CLD NEWS & NOTES . . .

➠ Rooms at the Marriott Portland Downtown Waterfront hotel in Portland, Oregon for the 40th International Conference on Learning Disabilities are now available! Book yours today at **https://goo.gl/9LheCY**

➠ Share your thoughts on what it means to be our standards and ethics statement on our Facebook page! Visit **https://goo.gl/cxv83r** to engage in the conversation!

➠ Nominations for Teacher of the Year (**https://goo.gl/ LEw1Z3**) and the Floyd G. Hudson Service Award (**https://goo.gl/7eSVks**) are due by May 1, 2018!

➠ *LD Forum* is currently seeking manuscript submissions, including submissions for two new columns – "Point/ Counterpoint" and "Issues and Trends in Learning Disabilities". For manuscript submission guidelines, visit **http://goo.gl/PcgWUI**. We are also seeking individuals to serve on our review board. Contact Joseph Morgan, Editor of *LD Forum,* at **ldforum@unlv.nevada.edu** for more information.

➠ Check out the latest issues of *Learning Disability Quarterly* and *Intervention in School and Clinic*! Also, consider submitting your work for publication in our flagship journals!

➠ Not currently a member of CLD? Join us at **cldinternational.org**!

The Research Committee of CLD is Searching for Outstanding Dissertations!

In an effort to promote and acknowledge research, the Council for Learning Disabilities recognizes an outstanding researcher who submits a manuscript-length paper about learning disabilities that is based on a doctoral dissertation completed within the last five years. The submission must not be under consideration for, or the recipient of, another award. The award recipient is a guest at the annual international conference, and receives a complimentary registration and CLD membership or renewal. The recipient is also presented with a certificate of recognition and a $500 honorarium to be presented at the 2018 International Conference on Learning Disabilities in Portland, Oregon. The recipient will be profiled in *LD Forum* (the CLD newsletter) and the national CLD website. Additionally, the recipient's paper will be submitted for possible publication in *Learning Disability Quarterly.* Because of this consideration, the submitted manuscript cannot be simultaneously submitted to or already published in another journal.

For complete information on submitting to CLD's Outstanding Researcher Award competition please visit **http://www.council-for-learning-disabilities.org/council-learning-disabilities-outstanding-researcher-award**

To apply for this award, please submit your materials via email to Dr. Kelli Cummings, Research Committee Chair (**kellic@umd.edu**). The deadline for submissions is May 1, 2018, 5:00 pm Eastern time.